



READERS LETTER
**ABOUT THE
EVIDENCE BASED
MEDICINE**

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What you wanna see?

Evidence based medicine (EBM) assumes the cloak of science, but almost nothing it espouses is scientific. Most particularly EBM transforms all symbolic or mathematical findings into semantic language and classes that often distorts the grain of true that the scientific method symbolically yields to us. There is a reason that mathematical analysis of experimental trials are only done by “intent” (randomization) and not in “occurrence”. For the most part EBM equates and thus confuses the two.

Let me briefly and sardonically present a few cornerstones of EMB for examples. The following examples are not referenced as my quarrel is not so much with those that would offer these concepts as pearls but those of us that accept the pearl as real.



NON INFERIOR

“If it’s non-inferior and less invasive, it must be better.” Although the nouns have been dropped, this is a modern version of a logical prove of god. Science is not syllogism. If syllogisms make science, I can well be science’s author. We offer it to push an agenda.

BEST PRACTICE

We are still knee deep in agenda. There may be some difference between a single technology moving in roughly a convergent direction, and biology (ever notice that we turned the tree of evolution off its pyramid) moving divergently. If we would be biologists, how can we pick the best species or most adaptive? Maybe we are rather just unwitting idiots of our favorite industry. I'm open to that view, but if we rally must choose the best car or truck, and use it for everything, we must be busily engineering the medical Yugo.

CLASSIFICATION OF EBM

We might as well quote Bible verses. There is no scientific law that classifies information in such an academic and scholastic format. The Krebs cycle is just as valid whether it was tested in a multicenter randomized trial or shared between labs on the back of a napkin. Small wonder that the scholastic researcher hopes to be a "partner" of the multimillion euro trial that will ensure academic and society chairmanship. It may be the most pedantic thing we do.

STS DATABASE

The king of mathematical and symbolic pretense masquerades as scholarship. If we were selling our wares in the local farmers market, we likely would be able to trade for comparable or even advantageous benefits. But we have to come up with a database to sell our wares virtually, and we (most of us) will surely lose our shirts as well as our farms. Its not like we are unfamiliar with data. In some ways we were the pioneers or proteges of database analysis, but now that we stuff it all into a big sausage maker and ask the sausage technocrats its ingredients we accept any explanation. More importantly it is a propriety database that we own, if at all, in name only. We have lost all control to the nobles and king, while we serve the feudal lords. We believe in this virtual monarchy. When we measure 1, 2 or 3 variables, say, arterial BP in a post op patient, we are much more critically involved. When the BP goes down, we seldom assume it has to be a BP problem despite what the numbers may "say". We may treat the BP but actively look for other and more critical explanations to change the result. But when we mix 40 variables together in our national databases, and have the statisticians pull out the answer, we proclaim, defend, and submit to the answer. We even allow that the same answer is a universal (as it gets) truth for any patient and any surgeon. At the bed side we would find the same manner of data



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analysis of our BP monitor dangerous and sophomoric. We are observing and responding to the wrong cues post hoc.

We all see the dissonance that spawns my irreverence, even if you may not follow the direction I am going in my discontent. Trust me or just yourself. We can unwind the layers of contradictions of each of the above with each having its own book. That is not my desire even if that is the current solution:make it better. We all have directions we would go if we were king. We can't nibble around the definitions, slap the discontents, and hang the cheaters to improve this hubris. This is who we are if based on evidence.

We can't change kings. We have to rethink monarchy. ■